

REMARKS

I. Amendments to the Specification

By this amendment, Applicants have corrected a typographical error on page 16.

II. Amendments to the Claims

By this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 3-4, 6, 8, 13, 15-18, 20, and 25. Support for the amendment to claims 1, 13, and 25, may be found at least on page 16, lines 3-17, of the specification. Support for the amendments to claims 3 and 15 may be found at least on page 20, lines 28-34. Support for the amendments to claims 4, 8, 16, and 20 may be found at least on page 15, lines 18-32, and Figs. 3 and 4. Amendments were also made to claims 6, 15, 17, and 18 in order to improve form and structure and do not alter the scope of the claims.

Claims 1-25 are currently pending. Of these, claims 1, 3-4, 8, 13, 15-16, 20, and 25 are independent.

III. Arguments

Claims 1, 3-8, 10-13, 15-20, and 22-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of U.S. Patent No. 5,946,658 to Miyazawa et al ("Miyazawa"), U.S. Patent No. 6,505,162 to Wang et al ("Wang"), U.S. Patent No. 6,173,266 to Marx et al ("Marx"), and U.S. Patent No. 6,236,968 to Kanevsky et al ("Kanevsky"). Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 9, 14, and 21.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), each of three requirements must be met. First, the references, taken alone or in combination, must teach or suggest each and every element recited in the claims. See M.P.E.P. § 2143.03 (8th ed. 2001). Second, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references in a manner resulting in the claimed invention. Third, a reasonable expectation of success must exist. Moreover, each of these requirements must “be found in the prior art, and not be based on applicant’s disclosure.” M.P.E.P. § 2143 (8th ed. 2001).

The Office Action has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for at least the reason that the cited references fail to teach or suggest each and every element of claims 1, 3-8, 10-13, 15-20, and 22-25.

A. Claims 1-2, 13-14, and 25

Amended claim 1 recites, among other things: “a conversation characteristic control section grasping conversation characteristics of said user and changing said output symbol string in accordance with the grasped conversation characteristics, the grasped conversation characteristics based on at least one of: a word used by the user with high frequency, a conversation pattern used by the user with high frequency, the continuity of conversation with respect to a specific topic, the number of uttered words of the user.” Miyazawa, as the Office Action concedes, fails to expressly disclose: “a conversation characteristic control section grasping conversation characteristics of said

user.” See Office Action, page 4. Furthermore, the combination of Miyazawa and Wang fails to teach or disclose at least this element of claim 1.

Wang appears to describe a system that changes a “dialogue state” and a “response action” according to user input dialogue. See Wang at col. 3, lines 56-63, col. 5, lines 3-6 and 45-53. For example, Wang's system determines which train ticket a user wants to purchase based on the user's input dialogue. See Wang, col. 8, line 55, through col. 10, line 65. However, these descriptions and example do not constitute: “grasping conversation characteristics of said user...the grasped conversation characteristics based on at least one of: a word used by the user with high frequency, a conversation pattern used by the user with high frequency, the continuity of conversation with respect to a specific topic, the number of uttered words of the user,” as claimed.

Independent claims 13 and 25, although of different scope, recite language similar to claim 1 and are patentable over the combination of Miyazawa and Wang for at least reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1. For at least this reason, claims 1, 13, and 25 are patentable over Miyazawa and Wang. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 2 and 14 depend from and add additional features to independent claims 1 and 13, respectively. Accordingly, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above.

B. Claims 3 and 15

Amended claim 3 recites, among other things: “an association function section extracting the synonyms and relevant words synonymous with and relevant to words uttered by said user from said storage section based on a conversation history and said input symbol string from said conversation pattern processing section, and outputting said extracted synonyms and relevant words to said conversation pattern processing section.” Miyazawa, as the Office Action concedes, fails to expressly disclose this element of claim 3. See Office Action, page 6. In addition, the combination of Miyazawa and Marx fails to teach or disclose at least this element of claim 3.

Marx appears to describe a system that selects synonyms based on input words, but is silent as to whether conversation history affects any of the system's operations. See Marx, col. 9, lines 30-39. Therefore, the descriptions in Marx do not constitute: “an association function section extracting the synonyms and relevant words synonymous with and relevant to words uttered by said user from said storage section based on a conversation history,” as claimed.

Independent claim 15, although of different scope, recites language similar to claim 3 and is patentable over the combination of Miyazawa and Marx for at least reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 3. For at least this reason, claims 1 and 15 are patentable over Miyazawa and Marx. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

C. Claims 4-12 and 16-24

Amended claim 4 recites, among other things: “an event data storage section, classifying said second input symbol strings according to subject matter and storing said second input symbol strings as event data.” Miyazawa, as the Office Action concedes, fails to expressly disclose this element. See Office Action, pages 8-9. Furthermore, the combination of Miyazawa and Petkovic fail to teach or disclose at least this element of claim 1.

Petkovic appears to disclose a system that classifies input audio according to “audio events” (e.g., silence, speech, music, and speech on music) and classifies recognized text according to “confidence level,” “emphasis,” and “length.” See Petkovic at col. 7, lines 52-60, and col. 8, lines 42-64. These classifications do not constitute: “classifying said second input symbol strings according to subject matter and storing said second input symbol strings as event data,” as claimed.

Kanevsky, relied on for its teaching of transmitting and receiving event data to and from another interactive system, fails to cure this deficiency.

Independent claims 8, 16, and 20, although of different scope, recite language similar to claim 4 and are patentable over the combination of Miyazawa, Petkovic, and Kanevsky for at least reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 4. For at least this reason, claims 4, 8, 16, and 20 are patentable over Miyazawa, Petkovic, and Kanevsky. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 5-7, 9-12, 17-19, and 21-24 depend from and add additional features to independent claims 4, 8, 16, and 20, respectively. Accordingly, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

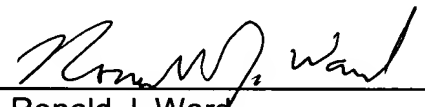
Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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